

CHAPTER II

CHANGING SOCIAL LIFE OF RAJA-MAYONG

“Social life is described as the multitude of interactions and joint actions of human beings. During this interaction or relationship of which the social structure consists a person confounds to certain rules or patterns of conduct. Social structure, therefore, has to be described by the institutions, which define the proper and expected conduct of persons in their various relationships. The social structure is an arrangement of persons in institutionalized rules and relationships; structural continuity is taken as the continuity of such arrangements.”¹

In shaping the caste system in Assam, the various non-Aryan local practices relating to marriage, economic pursuits, religion, taboos, totemism and similar other elements provided the base for it. As a result of the interactions of the two cultures, the introduced Indo-Aryan and the existing non - Aryan cultures many new caste emerged in the Assamese Hindu society which have no precedence in the Pan-Indian Hindu Social Hierarchy. ² For example, the Koches an aboriginal tribe of Assam now become a Hindu caste through proselytization.³ The Census Superintendent of Assam in 1931 remarked: Caste in the Assam valley is not as elsewhere,⁴

chiefly a functional division; it is really a racial division and functional castes are very few. It would appear in fact, that a large number of the castes had their origins in the different ethnic groups and in the process of adoption of Hinduism they entered into the caste fold by assuming the caste names mostly after the names of their respective ethnic groups. In fact, the Tribes like the Rabhas, the Kacharis, the Meches and many others were drawn to the Hindu system of caste organization through proselytization by Hinduism.⁵ The Assamese priestly class, with their liberal attitude, had played an important role in introducing their Tribes into the caste or *Jati* system. Caste is “one of the hereditary social classes in Hinduism that restrict the occupation of their members and their association with the members of other castes”

It is also regarded to be “a division of society based on differences of wealth, inherited rank or privilege, profession, occupation”.Caste also signifies “a system of rigid social stratification characterized by hereditary status, endogamy, and social barriers sanctioned by custom, law, or religion.”⁶

Though the word ‘caste’ is an English word, it is used by the Assamese villagers who are not at all familiar with English. The people of different castes want to live in proximity to members of their own caste in a village of multi-caste population. It has been shown that the division of the village in to a number of castes constitutes one of the most fundamental features of its social structure. It is sanctioned by Hindu society. With this view of the social structure, caste may be defined as a small and named, group of persons characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a

particular occupations and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system the caste system, therefore, gives to Hindu society segmentary character.⁷ There is no direct co-relation between the rank of a *Jati* in terms purity and pollution and Socio-Economic position of a *Jati* or an individual in a particular *Jati*. Social position does not reflect the means of person any one in any *Jati* can be poor. It is laid down that one should not eat food prepared by members of lower ranking *Jati* - Eating together means eating from the same dish or sitting in the same row. While invitations are issued to person belonging to different caste, when there is a ceremony in a particular house, separated arrangements are made for dinner for people belonging to different castes. Between the non- scheduled castes there is much greater interaction then between the scheduled castes and others.⁸ This is true because the village people became permitted to do so.

Caste, according to Dumont is not just a concrete arrangement, it is an ideology which is present on a universal scale. That is to say, all groups dwelling in India are influenced by this ideology of purity-impurity. Even Christians, Muslims and the Jews have been influenced by notion of hierarchy and the purity and pollution.⁹

Within the Hindu Hierarchy Ritual status is more important than Economic or Political power. The aspect of pollution is so pervasive that it could be practised even among men of the same caste.¹⁰

“Caste has a pervasive influence on all aspects of life from cradle to grave. It is a system which orders and regulates relationships. It gives a

place to every individual from the highest to the lowest and makes for a high degree of identification and integration." ¹¹

Jati or Caste had now grown to be such an important and universal feature of social organization, caste has become the centre of an individual's altruistic impulse and philanthropic activities. ¹²

According to Radhakamal Mukharjee values are more vital; most significant aspect of Indian Society; the most typical or unique value is that the people do not want to upset the caste system, ¹³ caste is a never ending process of Hindu Society; as soon as the child is born, the child is identified with the titles of the mother and father. The membership is confirmed on individuals at birth. The status of the person who belongs to a caste remains unchanged. Similar is the case with apartheid. As observed by Turner, "blacks have been segregated and excluded from all major social recreational, and institutional spheres; even marriage between blacks and whites were prohibited" ¹⁴ on that very ground until recently and distinction on grounds of race is almost uprooted at present.

It is evident that Pan-India system varna and caste was adopted in Assam in the same pattern. The Nidhanpura-Grant says that the system of Varna Ashrama's in this country was in a confused state and that Bhaskar Varma was born for the purpose of bringing it back to order. ¹⁵ It appears, therefore, that from the beginning a modified or distorted varna system was followed here. ¹⁶ Yet, from the existence of the gotra system, it is evident that the typical varnas i.e. Brahmin, Khyatriya, Vaishya, Sudra could be found in traditional order in Assamese Hindu Society. The Gotra is an exogamous division originating from a saint or seer. The Gotra

TABLE I
Caste, Community & Group wise Distribution of population & Level of Education of People of Raja-Mayong

Caste & Family No.	Primary	M. F.	High School	Matric	Higher Secondary	Under Graduate	Graduate	Post Graduate	Illiterates	Total Population & Percenta	Total Sex	ST	SC	Hindus
	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.			
Koch(48)	27 25	34 32	35 17	4 3	5 9	7 1	9 4	-- --	23 22	257 (II.87%)	144-113	---	---	100%
Nath(307)	271 269	172 164	182 150	31 13	50 15	16 6	42 15	3 1	107-133	1640 (75.57%)	874-766	---	---	100%
Keot(6)	2 4	2 1	-- --	1-1	3 1	1 --	--	--	1 --	17 (0.78%)	10 7	---	---	100%
Namasudra (23)	24 20	8 6	2	-- --	1 --	---	---	---	28 33	122 (5.62%)	63 - 59	---	122	100%
Ahom(3)	-- 2	-- 2	1 1		2- 1	2 --	2 2	---	-- --	15 (0.69%)	7 8	---	---	100%
Bodo(3)	1 1	3 2	2 1	-- --	2 1	-- --	---	-- --	1 --	14 (0.64)	9 - 5	14	---	100%
Tiwa(1)	1 1	-- --	---	1 --	---	-- --	---	---	1 --	4 (0.8)	3 1	4	---	100%
Rabha(1)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-- 1	4 (0.8)	1 3	4	---	100%
Nepali(19)	13 9	7 3	3 4	7 3	5 --	-- --	---	---	15 16	87 (4%)	51 36	---	---	100%
Bihari(2)	6 2	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --	2	10 (0.18%)	7 - 3	---	---	100%
	345- 334	227- 210	225- 173	43 20	69 27	27 8	53 21	3 1	117-147	2170	1169-	22	122	100%
											1001			

Source- Survey carried out by this investigator in 2006 Total families surveyed 413

is used in marriage and funeral rites. The Gotra is a coveted name to what Kula or *Jati* he belong to could be ascertained. This Gotra Tradition used in the Koch dynasty proves that Koches are not Sudras. They belong to the Typical Kshatriya Kula in Kashyapa Gotra. The term “Koch” is therefore regarded by some people to be derived from Kashyap.¹⁷

The Kings of Coochbehar have also Gotra and Prabar. They claim to be the descendents of Kshatriya kings.¹⁸ Similarly the Rajbongshis also are said to be of Kshatriya origin. The King Sahasrajun became the next king after Haihaya of the Chandra dynasty. The twelve Kumar Kshatriyas began to live at the address at Ratnapitha for fear of Parasuram by concealing their identity and introducing themselves as Mech.¹⁹

Brahmins are among the oldest of the Hindu settlers in the Brahmaputra valley. The king of Kamatapur, whose domination extended up to Kamarupa, imported a number of Brahmins from Mithila or Bihar in the thirteenth century. Some of them settled permanently. In the sixteenth century Koch ruler Viswa Sinha (1515-1540) brought Brahmins from Oudh and Sylhet whose descendants were known as Kamrupi Brahmins.²⁰

According to Andre Beteille it is common for Brahmins to refer to Non-Brahmins collectively as Shudra. Unlike to that the term “Shudra” has a more or less specific meaning in the fourfold varna hierarchy of Traditional Hinduism. It is associated not only with a specific rank in this ideal hierarchy, but also with specific occupations, a specific style of life and specific liabilities.²¹ It would not, therefore be right to attribute all Non-Brahmins as Shudras. In some specific categories, there are Kshatriyas in having their typical rites of adopting the sacred thread, ear-holes,

Kulaguru (Royal Priest) and observing quarantine for 13 days as a part of funeral rites in Raja-Mayong.

In between the Sudras and the Brahmins, there is another caste named the Kayastha, and its position is not definitely ascertained in the Varna Category. The Vedavyas Smriti includes them in the category of the Shudras on the otherhand. The Kayasthas are given a position next to the Brahmins and constitutes a priestly class for the Non-Brahmin caste. General attribution is that Kayasthas are Shudras in Assam.²²

The existence of the order of Baishya's of the fourfold system in Assam can not be ruled out. Caste names called the Saud, Mudoi, Baishya, etc are prevalent in Assam which may be the legacy of the Vaishya of the fourfold Varna system.²³

In consideration of the above background of the emergence of the traditional Hindu society in Assam, the proposed study in this chapter would discuss on the changing pattern of social life of Raja-Mayong village.

As regards the population of the Raja-Mayong village there are four castes, four ethnic groups and two three linguistic communities namely Assamese, Nepali and Bihari consisting of a population of 2170, (1169 males and 1001 females).122 people (5.62%) are scheduled castes and 22 people(1%) are scheduled tribe. The four castes are Koch, Nath, Keot and Namashudra. The number of population of the Koches are 257 (11.87%) (144 males 113 females). The number of population of the Naths are 1640 (75.57%) (874 males 766 females). The number of population of the Keots

are 17 (0.78%) (10 males 7 females). The number of population of the Namasudra are 122 (15.62%) (64 males 58 females). The number of population of the Ahoms are 15 (0.69%) (7 males 8 females). The number of population of the Nepalis are 87 (4%) (51 males 36 females). The number of population of the Biharis are 10 (0.18%) (7 males 3 females). (TABLE I)The demographic pattern revealed from the table shows that though Raja-Mayong was a Koch kingdom yet the Naths are the dominant population at present followed by the Koches. A small section of people of the Nepali and the Bihari community reside in the south-side of Raja-Mayong village. Religion wise Raja-Mayong village is inhabited by only Hindus.²⁴ the density of population in Raja-Mayong is 923.40 per square km.

A group of Karbi people (Mikir) resides in Burha-Mayong village, another revenue village of Mayong G.P., and are closely related to the Royal dynasty. The Portfolio of Senapati i.e. the military commander of the Mayong kingdom was assigned to the Mikir community of Burha-Mayong village, the place where the king resided formerly. This was the strategic administrative policy of the Koch king, Naranarayana, who united the various communities and castes in his Kingdom. The Hindu castes and communities residing in the Raja-Mayong are as follows:²⁵

1. Koch
2. Nath
3. Namashudra
4. Keot
5. Ahom
6. Nepali
7. Bihari

8. Bodo
9. Tiwa
10. Rabha

Amongst the Hindus a Hierarchy of caste was followed and is still in vogue to a noticeable extent. Although, occupation as a criterion for caste division was not rigidly followed in Assam, yet to a great extent, this, along with the social religious functions were considered as the main basis for organizing the castes, and for determining their position in the caste Hierarchy of the village.²⁶

But liberalism in rituals, in language and in caste, e.g. Sankardeva's Vaishnavism in Assam brought about a free interaction between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins.²⁷ Even *Sharaniya* and *Bhajaniya* Vaishnavas do not take the priest's *prashad* due to the ideological fear of adultery towards the Lord Vishnu, as the Vaisnavas believe that the non-Vaishnavites worship demigod along with the Lord Krishna.²⁸ Thus, the Hierarchy in the village can be divided into two types, namely, the Caste Hierarchy and *Sharan* Hierarchy. The former Hierarchy is four fold viz Brahmin, Kshatriya, Baishya and Shudra have already mentioned. The latter is threefold, namely, Satriya Gossain, Bhojaniya Baishnava and Sharaniya Bhakat. Though it is an intra religious division, yet it affects the caste Hierarchy. In these same contexts, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Bengal drew followers from different castes and tribes. Bengal although caste Hierarchy is there, Vaishnavites, who are drawn from the heterogeneous backgrounds interact freely among them.

It is Royal tradition that aboriginal section of the Koch people can not break the principle of Hierarchy of the village. On the basis of Hierarchical

position of the castes and the degree of social interaction amongst themselves within the village, the Hindus can be divided into three segments. The upper segment includes the Gossain, Brahmins, Koches. In this Segment the Brahmin or Gossain traditionally occupy the highest status and the Koches are next to them.²⁹

The middle segment consists of the Nath, Keots and Ahom. There are only two Ahom families in Raja-Mayong village: they belong to the same khel of Koch of the village, not in a higher position in Rites. The six families of Keots belong to the same khel of Koch in Raja-Mayong village.

In the Third segment of the Hindu population are included the most numerous castes of Namashudras and the Kaibartas. Traditionally Kaibatas are associated with the Royal families of the village; now, they do not belong to the Raja-Mayong village, reside in Hatimuriya village which lies about one k.m. from the village.

The Mikirs are inhabitants of Burha-Mayong village which lies about two and a half k.m.s from the Raja-Mayong village. Mikirs are essential part of the Royal festival of Raja-Mayong village.³⁰ The hierarchy of castes is determined on the basis of the principles of endogamy and commonality, in general. Acceptance of food and water from others also constitute a criterion in this regard.³¹ But in Raja-Mayong the status of a caste is determined by the participation in the Royal festival of the "Pancha Devata" or Basudava Gossain. Ritual precedence is an important factor in this regard. The Koch is at the top position because, the king of Raja-Mayong belongs to the Koch dynasty. The caste at middle segment is associated with the Royal festival and lower segments are not related to the

festival. Most probably, on that very ground of lowness, they have been excluded from the festival. Of course Mikirs are essential to inaugurate the Royal festival by traditional dancing with shield and sword. The idol of the main Deity, Basudeva Gossain (Salograma) belongs to the Royal Koch caste. There is no clash or public disagreement in regards to the Royal festival. Every body bows down his head towards the Basudeva or Pancha Gossain and the king in the time of the process of the festival.³²

Brahmins :-

Inscriptional evidences inform us that since the early times the Kamarupa kings patronized the learned and religious persons. They gave settlements to Brahmins by bringing them from different parts of India.³³ It is said that in the Pragjyotishpura, the king Naraka brought many Brahmins from Mithila and settled them in this country. On the basis of legendary accounts it is believed that Parasurama also brought Brahmins to this country even before Naraka and settled them in the northern banks of the Brahmaputra.³⁴

After the fall of the Gupta Empire towards the end of the 5th century A.D. a large number of Brahmin families migrated to Kamarupa.³⁵ Throughout the ancient period down to the time of Dharmapala in 12th century A.D. evidences are quite numerous of granting of lands to the Brahmins. The Brahminical culture also flourished in Kamarupa at that time to a considerable extent and many of the Brahmin scholars attained great fame³⁶. In the medieval period, particularly Koch king Naranarayana, greatly patronized the Brahmins.³⁷ Many Brahmins came to Kamarupa from Kanyakubja (Kanauj) Varanasi, Mithila, Navadweep and other parts of India during this period.³⁸ The earlier Brahmins were believed to have

migrated from the western parts of Uttar Pradesh and also from Orissa, but not from Bengal.³⁹

The history of Mayong says that the four Brahmin families were settled in Mayong by the Koch king Svarachcho Chandra Sinha in 16th century. They were Hara Chandra Sharma, Gaja Kanta Sharma, Santadhan Sharma and Gapal Chandra Sharma. They were brought from Coochbehar to look after the shrines viz. Royal salagram of the village, Ganesh Temple at Baha, Chanaka, Burha-Mayong, Gobhali and Hatimuriya respectively.⁴⁰

This type of hereditary adorations of shrines of the village continued till 1950; there after, it stopped when the last Royal priest Jay Deva Sharma died issueless. At present the shrines have been handed over to the respective khels. The local tradition say that 21 families were settled in the Hatimuria village near of the north side of Raja-Mayong village with grant of lands by the king of Mayong, Svarachcha Chandra Sinha in the 16th century to conduct the daily rituals of the shrines established by him. This village is still known "Bamun Chuburi" as her surname. This is historically also truth that an idol of pure copper of Bongshi Gopal or Basu Deva is in the custody of Sri Gopal Deka of the village which is worshiped by him and kept in the "Monikuta", is identified as a Brahmin's idol of Basu Deva. One of these above Brahmins families, Late Ram Sharma resided in Manaha village and other late Kandarpa Sharma has settled in Baghara village in the district of Marigaon.⁴¹

There is a traditional pond in the village (presently modernized for fishing) which is called Bamun pukhuri (pond). The history says that when the royal people were not able to find water by digging the pond in

the village, the Brahmins helped the king's people and water gushed forth. It is therefore known as Bamun pukhuri. Presently, it is handed over the public of Hatimuriya village. ⁴²

Koch Caste or Rajbanshi

The Koch is a tribe of Assam and northern Bengal, in the latter area it is generally hinduised as the caste of Rajbanshi, but in Assam the term Koch includes several Hinduised tribes, such as the Kocharis, Lalungs and Mikirs⁴³. Rajbanshi is a caste format within the Koch tribe, in northern Bengal and Assam. ⁴⁴

“The Koches are one of the race castes of Assam. Originally they were an aboriginal tribe, apparently of Mongolian origin which at the beginning of the 16th century rose to power under their great leader Vishva Sinha (1496 - 1533). ⁴⁵ King Biswa Sinha is called “son of Siva”, hence Coochbehar dynasty is called “Siva dynasty”. Biswa Sinha worshipped Siva and Durga. He was initiated in the Shaiva religion by Kali Chandra Bhattacharya. ⁴⁶

The term Koch, according to Waddel, has become more of a caste title, than a tribal appellation. A large number of Koch people call themselves Rajbanshi or clanmen, of the Bijni king and claim their alliance with the Royal race of Coochbehar. ⁴⁷ According to census report (1891) Assam Rajbanshis are mainly Koch and Mech Tribes who have assumed this name on conversion to Hinduism. ⁴⁸ Koch had attained a position of such power that of aboriginal people were anxious to be enrolled as members of their tribe and called themselves Rajbanshi the result is that at the present day the name is no longer that of a tribe but of a caste. ⁴⁹ In

Sibsagar and Lakhimpur these converts still retain their tribal names and the Koch is a caste which has not broken up into various subdivisions.⁵⁰

The reference to a Kovash (Koch) country is found in the “Yoginitantra”. The name of Koch caste is also found in the Brahma Baibarta Purana. About the rise of Koch Tribe, it is said that they are called Koch, as they have abdicated the style of Kshatriya for fear of Parasuram. The Koch people are agitating to get the status of scheduled tribes since 1967.⁵¹

The name, Koch is said to be the Prakrit form of Kovach, a word used in the Yogini Tantra to designate the non-Aryan tribes of Northern Bengal. Perhaps Kavach is the Sanskritized form of Koch.⁵² Dalton says that Koches are the Dravidians.⁵³ Hugchan regards that Koches could be included in Bodo group.⁵⁴ Riskey has shown that Koch is a synthesis between Dravid and Mongoloid. Of course, Waddel, regards Koches to be Mongoloid.⁵⁵

Mahapurush Sankardeva also cited the word Kovach in the Translation of a “Sloka” of the second canto of the Bhagawata Purana -

“Kirata Kachari Khasi Garo Miri
Yaban Konko Gawal,
Asom Muluk Rajak Turuk
Kovach Mlecha Chandal.”

In the process of cultural adoption Koch converted their original Tribal identity to that of a caste - The Koches consider themselves as equal with other non-Brahmin high caste and they really are.⁵⁶

“The Koches are divided into several endogamous divisions. Each of these divisions has a set of exogamous clans (Nikini). According to Risley(1891), Rajbongshi (Surabangshi) is their subcaste. They follow monogamy. Marriage by negotiation with mutual consent is prevalent. Married woman put vermilion and they wear shell-bangles as marriage symbol. Bride price (bou-pan) and dowry (jamai-pan) are not customary. Widow marriage is allowed but not favoured by the society. Both nuclear and extended families exist. They observe seven days of pollution after the birth of a child.⁵⁷

Koches are further divided into Saru-Koch, Bar-Koch, Pani-Koch, Rajbongshi, etc. They use the surnames like, Rai, Rajbongshi, Deka, Koch, Medhi, Bora, Bishaya, Hazarika, etc. of which the latter six are found in Raja-Mayong area.

They are animists and follow Hindu religion. They worship Kamakhya, Shiva, Kali, etc. Astaprahar, Holi etc. are their festivals. They cremate their dead. A period of mourning is observed for 13 days.”

Nath-Cult

“Nath cult” is an essential part of Hindu religion. One who follows the Nath cult, is also called Yogi. Naths have two religious sects Viz Nadaj and Binduj. Nadaj are sanyasis have no son and wife. Binduj are household Yogis are attached with family members.⁵⁸ Nath caste is a religious sectarian group of Hindu society. Nathsim is a theory of Hindu Philosophy since Vedic period under Shaivism.⁵⁹ Gradually, they became a

major part of the Hindu society. They, therefore, identify themselves as Rudraja Brahmin of Shiva Gotra and the followers of “Sama Veda” since 12 century A.D. ⁶⁰

They write “Nath” as their title and wear the “sacred thread” like the Brahmins. They were Yogis being descendants of the influential Nath gurus, like Matsyendra Nath, Goraksha Nath, Chowrangi Nath and others. Their ancestors had numerous followers; Princes bowed before them. Many Naths are still worshipped in temples and holy places in Nepal and Tibet. ⁶¹

The originator of Nath or the Yogi caste, Meena Nath, was a Koibatta by caste. He adopted the religious advises from the Lord Siva in the Belly of the fish staying there for at least twelve years. So, they belong to the religious unit of Shaivism. He was the inhabitant of Kamarupa. ⁶² Some scholars say that Naths were the group of persons emerged from the Tantric Branch of Buddhism specially the “Sahajia Pantha. Nath Sidha’s tried to create a harmony between Buddhism and Hinduism. ⁶³

According to Briggs, Matsyendra Nath was the Buddhist Sanyasi. Of course, he gave up Buddhism in later period and accepted Shaivism under the name of Meena Nath discarding his former Buddhist name, Rama Bajra or Anong Bajra. ⁶⁴

The period from the 4th century to 13th century A.D. is called the golden age of Nathism. During this period, Nathism extended up to Beluchisthan, Pakistan and Afganistan. In this, the master in Nathism played an important role to convert Buddhists to Shaivism. In this regard,

the scholars of Italy, Tucci says that Nathism is the bridge between Orthodox Hinduism and Heterodox Buddhism.⁶⁵

The early evidences say that Yogism is the oldest form of Meditation. The oldest Archaeological evidence of its existence is provided by a number of stone seals showing figures in Yogic posture, excavated from the Indus Valley and thought to date from around 3000 B.C.”⁶⁶

According to Mr. Hamilton, “Jogis or ascetics are still regarded as the highest spiritual preceptors, and those of the Jogic race who followed the traditions of their early ancestors and become actual Jogis, (ascetics)⁶⁷

According to the Ballalsen Charitrama, there was a clash between the king and Nath Guru (Preacher), Pitambar Nath. The king harassed the Nath Yogis. So, they came to Assam from Bengal in the 12th century.⁶⁸

According to Dr. Tamonash Chandra Das Gupta, Nathism is a new socio-religious complex in the religious history of India. In the 9th or 10th century, Nathism prevailed all over India while Hinduism was in a crisis.⁶⁹ Originally, Raman Braja, the Buddhist Sannyasee under the name of Goraksha Nath and Nath Buddhist Luipada under the name of Meena or Matsyendra Nath were Sahajia Buddhists.

“Religious movements have not failed to give their names to groups, which are now castes. The Bishnois and Sadhus, the Yogis, the Gossain and the Manbhaos are some of religious reformist caste. Yogi is a religious Sub-Caste. The disciples of the reformist master, Eknath, saint of

Maharashtra,⁷⁰ Bunker, Joria, Tanti, Kosthi, Tatva, Pattanulkarar, and Sale are the designations of the various weaving Castes. The waving Caste derived from the Sanskrit words for Silk Cloth. Katanee Jogi is also a weaving section of Assam. At present, they are cultivators holding the title of 'Nath'. The Gorpaguri Jogi derives the name of his Sub-Caste from his occupation of using magic to avert hailstorms. The Monihari Jogis are peddlers -selling beads and Ritha; Biknaths are so called because they sell ritha or Soapnut. In Assam, they are called Katanee, as they sell or spin silk (Pat-Muga), thread and weave cloth.⁷¹

At first, Yogi entered into Assam by 1159-1185 A.D. - Via Goalpara District Kamrup, (Nagaon and Morigaon). But so far as, Mayong is concerned the Nath people (Katanee) were brought from the District of Darrong in 16th century by the king of present dynasty of royal Mayong.⁷² Naths are the highest in population consisting of 75.57% percentage in Raja-Mayong village. The percentage of Nath population in Mayong G.P. is 16.4% percentage.⁷³

“Most probably, Nath people lived in Assam prior to the time of Sankardeva. They are called Yogis providing the silk, Pat-Muga; They are named as Katani. According to the Katha-Gura-Charita of Maheswar Neog, in primitive Assamese culture, there had been two Tatakiya Buddhist, one used to do Bejali and other used to do treatment for disease and another was a sapmela jogi, or a snake charmer and did their favorite work in the house of the Bara-Bhuyan family.⁷⁴

Naths were hard working and were engaged as fishermen and weavers. Finally, they resorted to cultivation and they had hardly any taboo

in their eating habit except the ones that have been initiated into the Vaisnava fold..

Social Custom

Nath people undergo Diksha or initiation to their cult in the last part of December. The women also take the Diksha, She is called Yoginee or Nathini. After the death of a person, dead body is placed in the posture of Samadhi and is buried. Now-a-days they cremate the common Nath People while in case of the Gurus Samadhi is the ideal mode of Burial.⁷⁵

The Nath people worship the idol, of Yoni Lingam. They interpret it as a divine combination of the earth and the Sky. The round circle of Shiva-Linga symbolizes the Earth and the perpendicular pillar represents the sky. The Sky is the first expression of five elements. The sky is the subtlest form while the earth is its gross one. The works of creation centres round the earth and the sky.⁷⁶

The four pillars of Nathism Viz. Master, Institution, Community and Yoga keeps together the Nath people all over India.⁷⁷ This has a similarity with the four pillars of Hinduism-Viz-Guru, Deva, Nam and Devotee.

The religious division of the Yogi Caste are- Ram Panthi Yogi, Sidha Kevallee Yogi, Kanphat, Aonghari, Matchendri Yogi, Sarangihar Yogi, Dubihar, Bhattihari Yogi and Kanipa Anghari Panthi Yogi.⁷⁸

Karbi :

There were 12 sub-clans of Karbis in Raja-Mayong area. The Karbis were known as Mikirs until recently. They had settled at Burha-Mayong in the 16th century A.D. The Koch kings engaged office bearers from all communities of Assam as a part of their diplomacy. The king of Mayong Swarachch Chandra Sinha appointed the head person (Banthai) of Karbis, Lt. Santaram Mikir as the Borbangthai (as the Bishya of the Mikir community). The Karbis followed the advice of the king of Mayong. Late Yogeswar Mikir was appointed to the post of the Pator (Minister) after discussion with the Bishayas, Medhis, Priests and Dekarajas. Bhem or Jaradia Mikir of Burha-Mayong was appointed to the post of Thakuria. These administrative honours to the Karbis attracted the people of Karbi community of Mayong area towards the King of Mayong. They are still upholding these Royal traditions which could be seen in the middle of April on 4th, 5th and 6th day of the month of Bohag, when the Royal Festival of Raja-Mayong, *Panchadevata* is celebrated.⁷⁹

The Hiras:

The Hira people divided into Hira khel and Maria Hira and Mahaldari Hira (Dom) were settled in Mayong by the king in 1690 A.D. The area of Mayong is known for abundance of fish., the former king of Mayong settled them at Hatimuria in the north side of the village for the Royal fishing. Late Nandaram Hira and his son were appointed to the post of Thakuria charged him to manage the musical drum, Bardhol, Dhepa Dhol, Dagar (small musical drum) and Kali.⁸⁰

Chatalu Hira and Chutiman Hira were appointed to the post of Thakuria' whose duty was to arrange earthen utensils for the Royal family as well as for community feasts.

The Mariya Hiras were engaged for house keeping and washing clothes.

Tanguram Hira was appointed to the post of Bishaya with the duty to look after the fishing. He had a right to serve as the Mahaldar of Swamps and Rivers which belonged to kingdom of Mayong.⁸¹

Dom :

Doms, also known as the Kaibartas, of Brahmaputra valley are mainly Vaishnavas and a large number of them are disciples of the Moamoria Gossain. The Assamese Dom is a fisherman. The name Dom is euphemised into Nadiyal. They are akin to the Keots. They have Halwa Dom, who have taken agriculture as their occupation, and Jalwa Dom or Nadiyal Patni who still follow the trade of fishing. Halwa Dom is considered more honourable than Jalwa Dom. It is said that the Patnis and Hiras come under the Dom caste. Those who remove dead bodies and rear and sell pigs are called Suariya Dom.

Originally, the Doms had settled in Mayong kingdom and the king of Raja-Mayong appointed the Head man of the Dom caste, to the post of Bishaya for fishing. They are now working in agriculture and one or two families of Hatimuriya are working as fishermen. They have a separate khel at present. The Koch or other castes do not take them as the members of the Khel organization.⁸²

Namasudra :

Namasudra is a caste which is regarded to be in the lowest of the hierarchy of the caste system. A large number of Namasudras migrated to

Assam in 1935 A.D. they are engaged in various occupations like agriculture, fishing etc. The Namasudras are numerous in the G, P. of Mayong with cultivation as the main and fishing as their secondary occupation.

In Raja-Mayong village, Namasudras are not aboriginal dwellers. They came to the area of Mayong G.P. in the villages of 1 No, Murkata, 2nd no. Murkata and Kachasilla village after 1948 A.D. Ninety five percent of the Namasudras are now cultivators. Some of their children have completed graduation while some are educated up to Master's degree. Some of them have acquired Technical education also.⁸³

Keot :

The Keots are originated from the Kaibartas. In Assam, their rank is superior to the Namasudra caste. They are scattered in Brahmaputra valley. Like the Kalitas, they are also divided into a number of functional sub-castes. The main division is in between the Halowa (cultivator) and the Jalowa (fisherman) Keots. The Halowa Keots are considered superior to the Jalowa Keots. The Jalowa Keots are found mostly in the plains of Assam.⁸⁴ They are divided into Mali-Keots, Kumar Keots, Sora Keots, Kamar Keots, etc. Halowa Das and Kaibarta are mentioned by Manu as alternative designations of the same people.

The Keot people of the Mayong Gaon Panchayat have migrated from Darrang to Mayong in 1920 and after; the king of Mayong helped them to settle in Mayong. They also respect the king and "Pancha Devata" of the Mayong kingdom.

Napit :

There are only two saloons of Napits in the chariali of Raja-Mayong on the north side of the village and the barbers have migrated from Bihar in 1978. It is interesting to note that a boy of Nath caste works in shop as a barber. The people of Raja-Mayong allow him. This is also a significant change in the mindset of the people of Raja-Mayong.

Muchi :

There are cobblers to do leather work, particularly sewing. They are mainly found in Barak valley. They are scattered all over the district of Assam. They are migrants from Bihar, Gujrat and U. P. They belong to Chamar caste. There is single family of leather worker residing at Kalsila about 1 km. from Raja-Mayong village. His shop is situated in Raja-Mayong Chariali.

Bansphor/Bhangi/Mehtar/Lalbegi:- They are scavengers and sweepers. They migrated to Assam from Panjab, Bihar etc. They follow the custom of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Most of their men-folk are skilled in basket works. The Lalbegi follows half Hindu and half Muslim customs and beliefs.

There is single family of sweeper working in Raja-Mayong village. They are mainly working as the sweeper in the markets of Mayong. He is a Hindu.⁸⁶

Nepalis :

The people of the Nepali community who are residing on the south-east side of the village have come from Tezpur 70 years ago. The place where they are living is named Murarbari a *chuck* of the Raja-Mayong village.

At first, they were living in middle of Pabitara range since 1937. In the meantime, thousands of infiltrators came to the reserve fields. Then, the local people decided to preserve the fields as the Wild Life Sanctuary and evicted the infiltrators. In order to preserve this field as the Wild Life Sanctuary, the Nepali people were also requested to leave the Pabitara. Then after, several Nepali families came to Raja-Mayong in 1975. The remaining are settled in the village of Hatigar, near of the Goranga Temple. The title, of Sharma, Bahadur, Lama and Bhujal, Tamang are among Nepalies. Initially they were socially adjusted with Nath people of Murarbari village in social rites. But at the death of a Nepali person called Ram Sharma, assistant teacher of Mayong Higher Secondary School the Nath people compelled Shyamlal a member of the Nath Community to undergo purificatory rites for carrying the dead body of Ram Sharma. This created a rift between the Nepalis and the Nath people.⁸⁷

Bihari :

There are 2 families of Bihari community which migrated from Bihar to Mayong recently.

Tongghar:

Tongghar is an essential part of the Social Life of Mayong. Tongghar is a high covered platform used for watching crops. It is also

called Deka Chang or Chang. The male members of the village use it as a watchtower at night. It is a small house on a high raised platform about six feet above the ground. It is made of bamboo poles and a thatched roof. The essential things of the Tongghar are a leader, a strong torchlight, umbrella, a long staff, a long dao, and a scream or a loud cry to alert the villagers about the coming of the wild animals to the paddy field. It starts generally from the last of January as soon as paddy plantation begins.

Raja-Mayong village is adjacent to a forest inhabited by wild animals like the Rhinoceros, Buffaloes, and pig. These animals create havoc in agriculture and the Tongghar is necessary for watching the crops in the fields particularly at night. Normally one Male goes to the watch tower in the evening and he raises hue and cry as soon as he sees the wild animals in the field and the other villagers then join him chasing away the animal.

The people are aware of wildlife conservation after the establishment of the Wildlife Sanctuary at Pobitara very close to the village. Of course poachers believed to be from other places resort to killing of wild animals like the Rhino. The favourite method of killing the Rhino for its horn is by electrocution.⁸⁸

Residential pattern :

There is no specific residential pattern in the RajaMayong village. The people of some communities reside together while some communities have migrated to various places in the neighbourhood for their livelihood.

The members of the Royal family have migrated most while other communities have resided in their own pockets.

The Nath people of the locality got converted into Vaisnavism of the Chaitanya sect.⁸⁹ As such they established a Vishnu temple and are concentrated mostly around the temple of Vishnu. The Koch people are associated with the temples where the Salagrams are preserved. Wherever the members of the Royal family migrated and settled, they established such a temple and the relationship among the various settlements are maintained particularly on religious occasions such as the Pancha Devata Mela.

The residential pattern of the village suggests that castes with the kings family and higher social status are socially dominant and at the same time the other lower castes enjoy sufficient freedom as the higher castes do not interfere in their activities. The small sections of the Nepali people also live in one side of the village. The small pockets of Namoshudras are segregated. But they are considered as outsiders as they have been attached to the village very recently.

In the recent times, the demographic composition of village has undergone significant changes; inter-caste marriages have taken place and rigidities relating to caste have loosened.

House Types:

Table – II reveals that the size of the house depends upon economic considerations and not upon caste. For example a family of the Nath caste can boast of possessing the largest house having up to 8 rooms in their

house on the one hand while a person of the same caste has the smallest house consisting of only one room. There are only 10 R.C.C. houses, which constitute 2.42% of the total houses in the Roja Mayong village. 44 households i.e. 10.65% possess Assam type houses with full brick wall. The material used for roof by 307 households i.e. 74.33% of the total houses are corrugated galvanized sheets which is popularly called Tin. In case of 52 houses, i.e. 12.59% of the total houses thatch is used as the material for roofing. The thatched house still exists in Raja-Mayong. (TABLE II) It is evident from the data that the housing scenario in the Raja-Mayong village is not at par with other developed places of the Mayong Block.

On the other hand, the type of toilet in the same table reveals that 19 families i.e. 4.60% used the open latrine, which is not hygienic to the village. Against 55 sanitary latrines, i.e. 13.31% of the total latrines, the table shows that 315 families i.e., 76.27% use the kutchra latrine. The people dump garbage in their yards. The sanitary conditions of the village are yet to be improved by the Panchayat or the individual efforts.

Besides these, only 1.69%, 7 families out of 413 read newspapers. Except the families employed in white-collar jobs, the respondent families of the different occupations have no interest in reading newspapers. The villagers say that newspapers have published mostly false news. Of course, the Radio is quite popular and well accepted by the villagers. The 323 families i.e., 78.20% listen to the Radio for news. (see TABLE III)

TABLE II
Caste, Community & Group wise types of houses and toilets in RajaMayong- 2006

Castes	Type of Houses						Type of Toilets				
	Average RoomNo:	Thatch	Tin roof	Assam Type	RCC	Total	Kutchra	Sanitary	Open	Total	
Koch	3.34(5)	3	37	7	1	48	43	5	-----	48	
Nath	3.60 (9)	23	252	27	5	307	256	39	12	307	
Keot	2.5 (4)	-----	---	6	---	---6	2	4	-----	6	
Namashudra	1.0 (4)	19	4	---	---	23	18	---	5	23	
Ahom	3 (5)		1	1	1	3	1	2	---	3	
Tiwa	4	-----	---	1	---	1	-----	1	-----	1	
Bodo	2 (3)	-----	1	2	---	3	1	2	-----	3	
Rabha	3	-----	---	1	---	1	-----	1	1	1	
Nepali	2.84(6)	6	11	2	---	19	16	1	2	19	
Bihari	2.50 (3)	1	1	-----	---	2	2	---	---	2	
Total		52 (12.59)	307 (74.39%)	44 (10.65%)	10 (2.42%)	413	319 (76.27%)	55 (13.31%)	19 (4.60%)	413	

*Figures within Brackets indicate the highest Number of Rooms Source- Survey carried out by this investigator in 2006 Total families surveyed 413

TABLE- III
Caste, Community & Group wise possession of different items of Respondents families in Rajamayong

Castes	Radio	Tape	Camera	T.V	Telephone	Weaving	L.P.G	News Paper	Motor Car	Scooter	bicycle	Tube well	Well	Pond	shallow pump	Electrical Motor	Power Tiller	No of Family
Kooh	41	9	---	12	4	21	20	2	---	4	4	36	4	2	15	---	1	4
Nath	252	24	9	67	27	174	96	4	5	23	253	217	21	3	69	2	9	307
Namasudra	6	---	---	---	---	---	1	---	---	---	8	7	---	---	1	---	---	23
Keot	4	2	---	3	---	---	6	---	---	1	3	6	---	---	---	---	---	6
Ahom	3	2	---	3	1	2	3	1	---	---	2	2	1	---	1	---	---	3
Bodo	2	1	---	2	1	---	2	---	---	---	2	1	---	---	---	---	---	3
Rabha	---	1	---	---	---	---	1	---	---	---	1	1	---	---	---	---	---	1
Bihari	2	---	---	---	---	---	1	---	---	---	2	2	---	---	---	---	---	2
Nepali	12	---	---	---	1	---	2	---	---	---	13	19	---	---	1	---	---	19
Tiwa	1	---	---	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1
Total & percentage	323 78.20	39 9.44	9 2.17	88 21.30	34 8.23	197 47.69	132 31.96	7 1.69	5 1.21	28 6.77	288 69.73	291 70.46	26 6.29	5 1.2	87 21.06	2 0.48	10 2.42	413

Source : Survey carried out by this investigator in 2006. Total Families Surveyed -- 413

Eighty-eight families i.e., 21.30% have Televisions in their houses and 39 families i.e. 9.44% have Tape recorders. The villagers have made full use of the electronic medias. The condition of the drinking water is quite satisfactory. 201 families i.e. 70.46% have tube wells in their houses, which are shared by some neighbours also. The rest of the villagers use the well and ponds. The 5 families i.e. 1.21% possess cars and 288 families i.e. 69.73% use the bicycles as mode of conveyance in the Raja-Mayong village.

It has been gathered from the interview of the few families that the traditional divisions of houses are still prevailing in Raja-Mayong viz. Choraghar (guesthouse), Barghar, Sorughar, Bharalghar, Tatghar, Pakghar, Gohalighar, Dhakishal and Manikut.

Choraghar (guesthouse) is used as the drawing room. Barghar (Mainghar) is used as the living room for the members of the family. Sorughar (subordinated house) is used for the younger members of the families. Bharalghar (Granary) is also a separate house and is used as the granary. Tatsal (weaving) house is a separate part of the main house or it has been separately arranged for accommodating the loom. Another house is the Pakghar (kitchen room), which is the typical house of the Assamese society. Gohalighar (Cowshed) is the cowshed and almost every household has a cowshed as the villagers rear their own cattle. Dhekishal is the part of the house for setting up of the wooden lever for pounding. It is generally

used to pound the rice for the household. Manikut (Divine house) is also a typical house for the devotees where the God is worshipped.⁹⁰

Family pattern:

It is essential to understand the terms like the Pariyal, Jak, Bhagi and Gyati for comprehending the social structure are of Raja-Mayong. The Term “Pariyal” means Nuclear, Joint or Extended family. A Nuclear family consists of a married man and woman with their offspring. On the other hand, a typical Joint or Extended family consists of a man his married sons and their wives and children, and his unmarried daughters. They share in common the health, wealth and shelter. The joint family may persist even after the father’s death if the eldest son by becoming the head takes place of the deceased father in the management of the house of the household. But is not largely prevalent in the rural areas now-a-days and so is the case with Raja-Mayong.

The term “Jak” refers to families originating from one family among the Nath caste. “The term “Bhagi” refers to the consanguines traced through the male line the bhagi relationship is not, however extended indefinitely, since its members are subjected to pollution if there is any birth or death in the Bhagi group. Normally, the Bhagi relationship is stretched up to the fifth generation and after that it ceases to exist exogamous within the caste.”⁹¹

The Bhagi in the king’s family refers to number of divisions of the family depending up to the number of sons viz Chari(four) Bhagi,

TABLE IV
Caste, Community & Group wise distribution of family type

Castes	Family Type		Total
	Nuclear	Joint	
Koch	41 (85.5)	7 (14.5)	48 (100)
Nath	285 (92.9)	22 (7.1)	307 (100)
Keot	6 (100%)	-----	3 (100)
Namasudra	22 (95.7)	1 (4.3)	23 (100)
Ahom	3 (100)	-----	3 (100)
Bodo	3 (100)	-----	3 (100)
Tiwa	1 (100)	-----	1 (100)
Rabha	1 (100)	-----	1 (100)
Nepali	19 (100)	-----	19 (100)
Bihari	2 (100)	-----	2 (100)
	383 (92.8%)	30 (7.2%)	413 (100)

Source – Survey carried out by this investigator in 2006.

Noy(nine)Bhagi and Chaidhya(fourteen) Bhagi. The families from the king, Moniram Sinha are known as the Noy-Bhagi. For example the families from the king, Muhat Sinha are known as Chari Bhagi. The present king of Mayong is in the group of Chaidhya Bhagi. These above three Bhagi groups observe the definite days of pollution when death of a member occurs.

In this chapter, the study of the 413 families of the village are classified into two-categories, viz-Nuclear, and Joint-family. Out of the 413 families, 92.8% (383) are Nuclear families while 7.2% (30) are Joint families and it is clear from the (TABLE IV) distribution of the family types in the Raja-Mayong that the Nuclear family type is predominant.

The occupational pattern of the village suggests that the cultivation is most popular. The village is crowded with one of the largest royal groups in the district of Morigaon.

The reasons for the dwindling of the joint family are, “economic self sufficiency through employment permits a higher degree of economic individualism which is not comparable with interest of the joint family. This has led to the fragmentation of large family.”⁹² Other reasons may be cited as the quarrel among the female members of the joint family, general increase of the number of members, questioning the superiority of the head of the family, generation gap with the senior members, jealousy, etc. all these reasons are to found in Raja-Mayong for dwindling of the joint family system.

“The Joint family system has existed in India since the earliest times and has been largely a product of agrarian economy. The system was suitable when the population was comparatively small and where the size of land holding was sufficiently large with enough scope for expansion. This situation has been change. Different Socio- Economic and Political forces have brought about significant changes in the organization of the Joint family in India.⁹³ In Raja-Mayong the land holding sizes amongst the villagers are since in such way that the Joint family system has been hardly-existed.”

TABLE- V
Land Holding Sizes and Number of Joint Families

Caste	Larges Medium	Small	Marginal	Sub Marginal	Landless	Total
Koch	2	2	2	----	1	7
Nath	7	8	3	4	----	22
Keot						Nil
Nepali	----	----	----	----	----	Nil
Namosudra	----	----	----	1	----	1
Ahom	----	----	----	----	----	Nil
Total	9	10	5	5	1	30

Survey conducted by the Investigator, 2006.

Family size:

Some of the families have up to 15 members while there are lone member families also. The caste-wise family size is given in table VI. The table reveals that the majority of the families comprise of four to six members and four member families are most numerous with a total of 95 (25.7%) (TABLE VI) and 5 member are second in number with a total of 94 (25.4%)

TABLE- VI
Caste, Community & Group wise distribution of Family Sizes

Family size	Castes											Total			
	Koch	Nath	Keot	Nama sudra	Ahom	Nepali	Bihari	Bodo	Tiwa	Rabha					
1	2	1		1		1									5
2	7	19		3											31
3	15	27		4		6	1	1							54
4	11	74	3	4	1	8		2	1	1					105
5	4	79	1	3	1	3	1								92
6	5	41	1	1	1										49
7	2	33	1	2		1									39
8	1	15		2											18
9	1	7		1											9
10		4													4
11		3													3
12		2													2
13															
14		1													1
15		1													1
	48	307	6	23	3	19	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	413

Source- Survey carried out by this investigator in 2006

The type of the family amongst the respondents was found to be always Patrilineal and Partilocal. No case has been reported by them of a son-in-law living in his father-in-law's house. Married daughters move out of the house and the daughters-in-law move in of course. Some sons-in-law have settled separately at Mararbori, so, the Surname of the Chukar-Chuburi is called as "Jowai-Basti", the village of sons-in-law. This has mainly occurred in the Nath families.

Marriage:

The marriage system in Raja-Mayong is also like any other place of Assam. Inter-caste marriage is generally discouraged. However, in case of an inter-caste marriage the couple is accepted by the society after they perform purificatory rites and offer a feast and fine to the tune of 2500 rupees. Even if they are finally accepted by the society, they do not enjoy the same status in the society. They are often degraded from the social posts like the³ headman, treasurer, principal singer of the village hymnal group, clan priest, etc. There are at least ten couples who have married outside their castes in the village.

Marriage alliances in Raja-Mayong are spread both in smaller and larger Geographical expanses. More than 31.42% of its marriages involve partners from amongst within the villages where as 68.57% marriages involve partners from outside the village out of which 9.92 marriages are restricted to a smaller Geographical expanse due to the environmental situations.(TABLE VII) On the other hand, Raja-Mayong had

TABLE - VII
Caste, Community & Group Wise distance of grooms and brides in Raja-Mayong (Major Caste and Community)

Caste & Community	0 --- .001km	.001 --- .05 km	.05 --- .9km	1 ---7 km	15 -75 km	U.D	U.P	Total Marriages
	M. W. D. L	M. W. D. L	M.W.D.L	M.W.D.L	M.W.D.L	M.W.D.L	M.W.D.L	
Koch	1 - - - - -	- - 1 - - - -	- - - - - 1	--13, 2, 6	6, 26, 16, 9	-- 3 7 - - - - -	- - - - - - - - -	91
Nath	4 - - - - -	6, 14, 7 - -	30, 78, 27, 6	10, 49, 10, 10	12, 76, 83, 39	-- 5, 9, 5	- - - - - - - - -	480
Nepali	- - - - - - - -	- - - - - - - -	- - - - - - - -	1, 2, 3 - -	- 2, 2 - - - -	--9, 4, 4	-- 1- 2 - - -	30
Namasudra	- - - - - - - -	- - - - - - - -	3, 15, 5 - -	- 2, -, 4 -	- - - - - - - - -	- - - - - - - - -	- - - - - - - - -	29
Total	5	6, 15, 7 - -	33, 93, 32, 7	13, 64, 19, 16	18, 104, 101, 48	-17, 20, 9	-- 1- 2 - - -	630

Source - Interviewed with the Village-Women 2006

- M -- Mother of the Respondent
- W -- Wife of the Respondent
- D --- Daughter of the Respondent
- L --- Daughter-in-law of Respondent
- U.D. --- Outside the District
- U.P. --- Outside Province

sociopolitical ties with other places from the time immemorial for its Tantric and Magical excellency and holds marriages from larger expanses due to this fact. The study reveals that the Nath and Namashudras have a large number of marital ties within the village. The Nepalis and the other high castes have dispersed in a larger area. The marriage tendency shows that the families outside of the village wanted to be a member or partner of marital ties with the families of Raja-Mayong because it is famous for Milk, Meat and Fish and higher status of Royal family.

The people in the village appreciate the family planning programme of the Government on principle but in practice it is noticed that no family has adhered to the principles of family planning.

Literacy:

There are four lower primary schools including one Venture school, two e.g.s. schools, two anganwadi centers one M. E. School, one Higher Secondary School and one Degree Arts College has started in the village in September 1992. The first school, the Mayong Lower Primary School was established in 1917.. The local people constructed the building of this school with their voluntary services. The concern for removal of illiteracy appears to have existed predominantly amongst all sections of the people of the village. The local people collectively established the High School in 1959 under the patronage of the erstwhile minister late Matiram Bora. The High School was upgraded to a Higher Secondary in 1985. The college is also the outcome of the initiative and collaborative effort of local people and their donations.

TABLE- IX
Literacy Level of Respondent Heads of families in different occupational categories

Literacy Level	Cultivators	Share Croppers	Agricultural labourer	Daily Wage earner	Service men	Trader	Fishermen & Mahalderis	Artisans	Contractors	Total
Primary	55	17	25	3	4	10	---	---	---	114
M. E.	42	7	17	1	7	4	1	---	1	80
High School	40	9	16	2	15	3	2	---	---	87
Matriculation	13	---	3	---	13	---	---	---	---	29
Higher Secondary	9	---	---	---	9	---	---	---	---	18
U.G.	1	---	---	---	2	---	---	1	---	4
Graduate	7	---	---	---	11	3	---	---	---	21
Post Graduate	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Illiteracy	11	4	29	15	---	---	1	---	---	60
Total	178	.37	90	21	61	20	4	1	1	413

Source: Survey carried out by this investigator in 2006.

TABLE - VIII
 Literacy Level of Children Belonging to the Families of Different Occupational Categories (413 Families)

Literacy Level	Cultivato		Trader Business men		Servicem		Agril Labourer		Share Cropper		Fisherm		Artisan		Mahalde		Others		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Primary	64	54	11	9	25	17	51	33	15	10	3	1	---	1	---	1	---	1	296
M.E	55	42	6	6	7	18	28	30	14	9	---	1	---	---	---	---	---	1	217
High School	73	53	11	4	17	13	9	8	9	5	1	---	---	1	1	---	---	---	205
Matric	10	3	2	---	6	3	---	---	3	1	1	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	30
H. S.	21	---	3	3	11	7	6	2	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	64
U.G.	7	---	1	---	6	3	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	2	1	---	---	26
Graduate	13	6	3	---	10	3	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1	---	---	---	36
Post Graduate	2	1	---	---	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	4
Illiteracy	30	25	7	4	---	---	15	14	6	2	---	---	1	---	---	---	---	1	105
Total	275	199	44	26	83	64	111	87	48	27	5	3	1	1	5	2	1	3	983

Source - Survey carried out by this investigator in 2006.

Table VIII depicts the levels of literacy of the Children of the 413 respondent families in Raja-Mayong. Among the children of the respondents, 89.42% are literates while 10.58% i.e. 105 children are found to be illiterate. The literacy among the boys is Higher with 58.29% i.e. 573 of the total 983 children. In every level of Education, the percentage of girls is lower than the boys.

“It is a common notion among the poorer section, generally, that Primary Education is sufficient for the girls to equip them to carry out the household activities to which they are believed to be condemned or destined.”⁹⁴ The percentage of literacy appears to be low among those in the occupations of cultivation, agricultural labourer, businessmen and sharecroppers. Illiteracy is the highest among the cultivators i.e. 52.38% (55) and agril labourers. Economic hardship may be one of the factors for such high percentage of illiteracy among them. The level of illiteracy of the children of the people engaged in various services is 0%. All the 147 children of this category are literate (table VIII)

The level of illiteracy of the children appears to have relation with educational level of their parents. Table IX gives the educational levels of the parents of the respondents of the different categories. The agricultural labourers have the lowest literacy, 29 respondants, i.e. 48.3% of the total agricultural labourers are illiterate. Like wise, their children have also the lowest literacy. On the other hand, the people engaged in various services have 100% literacy.(TABLE VIII and TABLE IX).

There are no records of literacy study of Raja-Mayong village in the past for the study of growth of literacy. But if we take into consideration

the figures of block level, Panchayat level and District level literacy in the past we can safely deduce that the literacy of Raja-Mayong has risen considerably in the recent past. The establishment of Anganwadi Centres, , increase in the number of educational institutions, rise in the awareness of the parents, etc. may be the reasons for the increase in the literacy.

It is a welcome sign that after the establishment of the college, the literacy of the higher education has increased to a considerable extent. The literacy rate of the area in the district or block level was 47.90% percentage as per census report in 1991. It has increased to 59.44% percentage in 2001, census report. But the surveyed report of the proposed study shows that it has increased up to 82% percentage in 2006. On the other hand, there were only 22 graduates in the area, in 1992. The number of graduates has increased to 241 in 2005. There were only 2 Postgraduates in 1992. In 2008 the number increased to 15 including 4 females.

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